

Message Text

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 8174

EXDIS/NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, IZ, IR

SUBJECT: KURDISH LEADERS VISIT TEHRAN; PRESS REPORTS ON WAR

1. FRANK HAWKINS, AP CORRESPONDENT FOR MIDDLE EAST, RETURNED SEPT 22 FROM 3-DAY VISIT TO KURDISH WAR ACCOMPANIED BY JAMES CLARITY OF NYTIMES. HAWKINS TOLD EMBOFF IDRIS BARZANI AND KURDISH "MINISTER OF HEALTH" MAHMUD OTHMAN WERE ON SAME PLANE TO TEHRAN, HAVING OSTENSIBLY COME TO CONSULT WITH RED LION AND SUN OFFICIALS. NO FURTHER DETAILS YET AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES.

2. HAWKINS GOT FIRST OF FOUR STORIES ON WIRES SEPT 25. HIS OPENER NOTABLE FOR DETAILS FROM KURDS ABOUT EXTENT SOVIET DIRECTION IRAQI MILITARY OPERATIONS: "SOVIETS ARE FLYING COMBAT MISSIONS AGAINST THE KURDS IN SOPHISTICATED TU-22 BOMBERS AND SU-20 FIGHTER-BOMBERS WHICH IRAQI PILOTS ARE NOT YET QUALIFIED TO FLY...IRAQI AIR FORCE OPERATIONS CENTER IN BAGHDAD, THEY ALSO CLAIMED, IS DIRECTED BY SOVIET BRIG. GEN. VALDIMIR NIKOLAI." IT ALSO IDENTIFIED LT. COL. ALEXANDER VASILEV AS KIRKUK-BASED ADVISER DIRECTING MANY OPERATIONS AGAINST KURDS. STORY CONTAINED USUAL APPEAL FOR US SUPPORT, PLUS BARZANI STATEMENT ABOUT IRANIAN HELP WITH REFUGEES THAT "THE SHAH HAS BEEN GOOD TO US, BUT WE NEED MORE GUNS." HAWKINS STORY APPEARED SEP 26 TEHRAN JOURNAL WITHOUT HIS

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BY-LINE AND WITHOUT MENTION IRANIAN AID OR KURDISH REQUEST

FOR US HELP.

3. ANDREW MURRAY, CONTRIBUTOR TO SUNDAY TIMES, HAS HAD 3 ARTICLES ON KURDISH WAR PUBLISHED IN KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL(SEE MEMCON 9/9/74). SEPT 24 STORY QUOTED MASSOUD BARZANI AS SAYING "THE AMERICANS HAVE NOT EVEN REPLIED (TO REQUESTS FOR HELP). ISRAEL GIVES US NOTHING. I WISH WHAT BAGHDAD RADIO SAYS ABOUT OUR BEING FINANCED BY ZIONIST-IMPERIALISTS WERE TRUE." HAWKINS SAID MASSOUD BARZANI GAVE HIM A DIFFERENT VERSION: "IRAN WOULD NOT BE GIVING US ARMS WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE US. EVEN IS ISRAEL IS HELPING US, IT MUST HAVE US APPROVAL."

4. COMMENT: HIGH RATE OF CASUALTIES IN WAR AND GROWING IMPRESSION IRAQI EFFORTS TO CRUSH KURDS ARE FAILING ONCE AGAIN HAVE INCREASED JOURNALISTIC INTEREST IN ENTERING KURDISH AREAS OF IRAQ. QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR KURDS COMMON THEME IN ARTICLES WHICH HAVE APPEARED AND WE CAN EXPECT CONTINUED INTEREST IN THAT ASPECT.

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